Governance rules of the European Legislation Identifier Task Force (ELI TF) and processes to changes to ELI specifications

1. Introduction: ELI specifications

The Task Force "European Legislation Identifier", short "ELI TF", is the body created by the eLaw/eLaw Working Party of the Council of the European Union to define ELI-related specifications and to ensure their future evolution.

For this purpose, the ELI TF has drafted a number of specifications that together form the ELI standard. These specifications guide the stakeholders in the implementation of ELI. In particular, these specifications are at the time of writing:

- Pillar 1: Set of ELI URI template components
- Pillar 2: ELI ontology
- Pillar 3: Recommendations on the serialisation of ELI metadata elements

These specifications, including all previously published versions and their release notes, are freely accessible in the Metadata Registry (MDR) hosted by the Publications Office of the European Union: http://publications.europa.eu/mdr/eli/

In addition to this, the ELI TF is responsible for proposing possible updates to the "Council conclusions inviting the introduction of the European Legislation Identifier (ELI)" (OJ C 325, 26.10.2012, p. 3–11). These updated versions are adopted in the Council of the European Union.

The ELI TF encourages ELI specifications to be available in multiple languages.

> Note: Whenever the elaboration of the specification is supported by external funding, e.g. via the European Commission's ISA^2 programme, the ELI TF will seek to request funding for making those specifications available in at least English and French.

In addition to the specifications, the ELI TF has drafted a number of best practice guides, notably the "ELI Best practices report" and the "Technical ELI implementation guide" (cf. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli-register/resources.html). These best practice guides, while of great value in assisting with the implementation of ELI, are not formally ELI specifications.

2. ELI TF

The ELI TF consists of the European countries that have implemented ELI.

For the purpose of being able to contribute effectively to the ELI TF activities it is necessary that the members have acquired expertise in implementing ELI. High commitment and responsiveness to participate in the validation of reports and drafting of specifications is therefore requested.

Three criteria are set for members to join the ELI TF:

1) The country must have started implementation of ELI and have a clear roadmap for subsequent ELI implementation,
2) The participant must have enough knowledge about the subject to be able to contribute to ELI discussions,
3) The participant must be committed to participate in and contribute to the discussions of the ELI TF (review of reports, contribution to technical proposals, etc.).

The ELI TF is presided by the ELI TF chair, appointed by the vote of the majority of its members of the ELI TF. The chair represents the ELI TF at the Council of the European Union and in other European or international fora. The chair also represents the ELI TF at the Council's expert group on the European Legislation Identifier dedicated to raising awareness on the ELI specifications.

The Publications Office of the European Union as ELI coordinator is also a member of the ELI TF. The Publications Office of the European Union currently also assures the ELI TF secretariat.

New countries that meet the criteria above can, on invitation by the ELI TF chair or on request of the country in question, join the ELI TF. In the second case the ELI TF chair will inform the ELI TF of this request and, in the absence of objections, formally invite the country in question to join the ELI TF.

In the case of objections, the issue will be discussed at the next ELI TF meeting and be decided by simple majority of the ELI TF members.

3. Decision making and membership

Each implementing country and the Publications Office of the European Union counts as a member of the ELI TF for the purpose of this governance structure as a single member of the ELI TF.

- Note: Each member of the ELI TF may send multiple delegates to ELI TF meetings. However, for the purpose of this governance they must express a single position

The ELI TF aims for consensus in its decisions. Consensus is here defined as "[g]eneral agreement, characterized by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interests and by a process that involves seeking to take into account the views of all parties concerned and to reconcile any conflicting arguments. Consensus need not imply unanimity" (ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004, cf. 1.7)

Note that in the absence of unanimity, the ELI TF chair can propose a vote on the proposal. The proposal is in this case deemed to have reached consensus if at least 75% of the ELI TF members approve it.

4. Maintenance of existing ELI specifications

On recommendation of the chair of the ELI TF the ELI TF must with the support of the majority of its members appoint a project editor for each existing specification document. The chair of the ELI TF can, if needed, propose to replace a previously appointed project editor, to

be approved by the majority of the members of the ELI TF. The project editor must implement the decisions taken by the ELI TF in the specification document for which he or she is responsible.

Proposals for modifications to ELI specifications fall into three categories:

4.1 Editorial changes

The project editor can implement at his or her discretion editorial changes to the specification document for which he or she is responsible. He or she must inform the members of the ELI TF via email of the changes implemented and, on request of a member, justify this decision.

4.2 Optional changes

Any member of the ELI TF can propose the implementation of an optional change to a specification document. Proposals for optional changes must be sent via email at least five working days prior to an ELI TF meeting to all ELI TF members. They must be discussed in an ELI TF meeting.

It is considered approved if the simple majority of the ELI TF approves it. The project editor must then implement this change.

4.3 Mandatory changes

Any member of the ELI TF can propose the implementation of a mandatory change to a specification document. Proposals for optional changes must be sent via email at least the working days prior to an ELI TF meeting to all ELI TF members. They must be discussed in an ELI TF meeting.

In order to be approved, the proposal must have the consensus of the ELI TF members. The project editor must then implement this change.

5. Creation of new specification documents

Any member of the ELI TF can propose the creation of a new specification document. In this case they must clearly specify the scope of this new document and indicate the project editor responsible. At least 10 working days before the ELI TF meeting, during which this specification document should be discussed, the project editor must circulate via email a draft of the document.

Any new specification document can only be adopted by consensus of all ELI TF members. Once adopted, it must be published on the MDR website. From this moment on it follows the rules for the maintenance of existing ELI specifications.

6. Transparency

All decisions of the ELI TF on

- the appointment of a project editor
- the proposal of a new ELI specification

- the proposal for the modification of an existing ELI specification
- the decision to adopt or modify an ELI specification

must be recorded in the decision log of the ELI TF (to be created) and, if applicable, in the meeting minutes of the ELI TF.

The decision log of the ELI TF must be maintained by the ELI TF secretariat. The decision log must be updated at least after each ELI TF meeting.

7. Additional definitions

- Standardization: "activity of establishing, with regard to actual or potential problems, provisions for common and repeated use, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context" (ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004, cf. 1.1)

- Standard: "document, established by consensus and approved by a recognized body, that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context" (ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004, cf 1.3)

- Project editor: person assigned responsibility for the editing and updating of a specification document. It is the responsibility of the project editor to maintain the document throughout the stages of technical work, (inspired by Consolidated JTC 1 Supplement 2016 — Procedures specific to JTC 1, 1.11)

- Editorial change: "any permitted change that does not alter the technical content of the standard" (ISO Guide 21-1:2005, 3.7)

- Optional change: any change to a specification that members of the ELI TF are not obliged to implement for compliance to that specification

    o   Examples for optional changes: Introduction of a new optional property in the ELI ontology or addition of a new URI template component

- Mandatory change: any change that members of the ELI TF must implement to stay compliant to that specification

    o   Example for mandatory changes: Introduction of a new mandatory property or suppression of an existing property in the ELI ontology; suppression of an existing URI template component

- ELI TF meeting: any meeting of the ELI TF, be it face to face or via electronic media, duly convoked by the ELI TF chair